



# THE NATIONAL PREACHER.

## And Village Pulpit.

---

Vol. III.—New Series.]

JUNE, 1861.

[No. 6.—Whole No. 834.]

---

### SERMON XVI.

BY REV. A. L. STONE,

PASTOR OF THE PARK-STREET CHURCH, BOSTON.

#### THE WAR AND THE PATRIOT'S DUTY.

"WHEREFORE I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me; the Lord the Judge be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon."—JUDGES 11: 27.

AT that period in the history of Israel called "the time of the judges," and at a point in that period of great distraction and confusion in national affairs, no judge at the head of the administration—the princes discordant among themselves, every man doing that which was right in his own eyes, and the whole nation corrupting itself with idolatry—the king of the Ammonites moved a great army into the pleasant and fruitful vales of Gilead, with intent to subject all that fertile region east of the river to his own sway. It is well for the children of Israel in Gilead that they succeed in making Jephthah their captain, and commit the con-

duct of the war to him. He accepts the trust, and justifies the confidence reposed in him by the wise and prompt measures which he adopts. The armed invaders are already upon his soil; the Ammonites are the trespassers, but Jephthah is patient and forbearing. He does not precipitate himself upon his enemies—"a word and a blow," the blow first—but sends messengers to the invading king to ask the reason and the justification of this act of hostility. When was ever the hand of violence without a pretext for striking? The king asserts that when the Israelites came up out of Egypt they dispossessed him of those very lands, and that he is there to regain his own; a claim that has slumbered three hundred years trumped up now, evidently for the occasion. Still, Jephthah is patient and calm. It is worth while, if he can, to show the Ammonites the injustice of their claim, to convince them of the righteousness of Israel's cause, and by argument and persuasion to turn back the tide of strife. And again he sends messengers to rehearse the matter at large—how that the Ammonites had been originally dispossessed by the Amorites; that the Amorites had waged an unjust war against Israel, and lost these lands to her in that conflict; that the Supreme Disposer and Executive had commanded Israel to take possession of this region and hold it for him; that they had held for three centuries; that their holding had never been molested or disputed, and that therefore the present invasion was unjustifiable. Little cared the covetous king of Ammon about the right of the case. Probably he and his forces encouraged themselves over this long delay, this fruitless negotiation on the part of the new captain and the men of Gilead. They said, very likely, one to another: "These men are afraid to fight us; they will yield all we have demanded. If they had not been cowards, or altogether unprepared to meet us in arms, they would not have stood talking so long. We have only to show a bold front, and these rich provinces are ours, even to the banks of the Jordan; and then, as the next step, the whole Jordan valley on either bank, the border provinces, will fall to our dominion."

They had mistaken their man. While delaying and negotiating, Jephthah had been assembling forces at Mizpeh. He had put the Ammonites into the wrong. He had shown his desire for a righteous peace. He had pushed his forbearance to its utmost limit. Before God and man he had convicted the invaders of committing a wanton and indefensible assault. Then he marched, and the battle was joined. And the Lord delivered the Ammonites into the hands of Jephthah; "and he smote them from Aroer even till thou come to Minnith, even twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel."

From the horizon that has been darkening day by day for months past, as our eyes have looked southward, there have shot

up at last the lurid clouds of war. Out of the bosom of the cloud we have seen the sulphurous flashes and heard the crash of the thunders, and know that the bolts of doom have fallen. The curtain that hung before the scene in that Southern harbor, where one little patriot band stood at bay, ringed about with a score of iron-mouthed batteries, rose, and the gaze of thirty millions of people in this land was fastened upon the opening of the great tragedy. Against the brave old flag and its few defenders, traitorous and rebel hands launched the missives of death and destruction. For a while it waved amid clouds and smoke, and its champions gave back the stormy salutation of the hostile leaguer, four-score against seven thousand, and then upon the well-defended and blackened ruins came down the stainless bunting, a martial shroud for the lost fortress. And over the land, from city to city, and home to home, waking the echoes of every hillside and every hearthstone—uttered by the lightning's fiery tongue, repeated by the press, and vibrating on all the air—has gone one brief word, that has in it a world of dreadful meaning: "War!" "War!" That word is ringing in our ears to-day; we can not shut it out. That meaning is on our hearts; we can not throw off the burden.

Do you ask, "Why repeat that word here, within this calm retreat, consecrated to the utterance of that Gospel which is "peace on earth, good will to men?" If all the air outside is stirred by it, why not keep these sacred hours and this sacred place for other words and sounds—the words of love and mercy? Because the most momentous question we can ask to-day of the oracles of God, is what spirit we ought to cherish, and what duties we have to perform in this great stress that is come upon us; because our country has a right to be remembered, as we come with all that keep holy time, to the Throne of Grace; because we can not, as Christian patriots, forget her before God in this day of trouble; because nothing has more at stake, in a time of war, than God's religion and all its ordinances; because by example of our godly ancestry, our old puritan worthies of the New-England pulpit, who consecrated the banners, and baptized the swords, and blessed the soldier, in the ancient fight for freedom, and sometimes went before him to the field, as on the green sward of Lexington on that April day, long ago—their descendants in the pulpit can not be true to God in the discharge of their sacred functions unless they are true to their country; and because, for one, I believe that there is no duty for the Christian pastor so sacred to-day as to seek to swell, and steady, and guide the currents of patriotic self-devotion. Very likely some of you will judge otherwise. I am not indifferent to the judgment of my fellow-men, but as I think and believe I must speak. Let us look, then, at our relations and our duties in the strange, tragic time upon which we are fallen.

And the first point is, Can we truthfully and honestly borrow the words of Jephthah the Gileadite to the king of Ammon, as our vindication to our brethren and foemen of the South: "Wherefore I have not sinned against thee?" The question is not whether individuals have spoken harshly, rashly, and unfraternally against their fellow-citizens of the Southern States. Not whether the Northern conscience has widely and earnestly pronounced against the inherent unrighteousness of the great domestic institution of the South. Not whether by all means fairly and lawfully open to Christian reformers—the pen, the press, the pulpit, the rostrum, the varied voices of free discussion—humane and philanthropic men have done their best to revolutionize the public sentiment of this land, and bring us back to the acknowledged position of the fathers and founders of the Republic. Not whether in the settlement of new territories freedom has poured in her majorities and saved the virgin soil from the curse of slavery. Not whether one half-crazed old man, on his responsibility to God and his own soul, dashed himself upon the ramparts of that institution in a wild crusade. None of these issues have been made. It is known that none of these are the real issues. It is a parricidal hand that has been lifted. The blow that has been struck has been delivered against the breast of the National Government. The question is—the only pertinent question: "WHAT HAS THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT DONE TO INJURE OR OFFEND ONE OR SEVEN STATES OF THE SOUTH?" And that question can not be answered. It will go down the stream of history unanswered and unanswerable. Not one right has been trampled on; not one immunity withheld; not one privilege denied; not one liberty infringed; and not even a solitary interest threatened. If the issue were with Northern freemen as individuals, it could not be successfully maintained that the South had ever suffered any wrong. If any right in this land is sacred and universal, it is the right of free discussion, and the exercise of this right is the extent of Northern sinning. We have thought and felt and believed, and have therefore spoken, but we have obeyed the laws. We have kept the Constitution, only contending that it should be interpreted as the Fathers framed it, and as all parties now confess—even the authors of the new—in the interests of justice and freedom. But what possible indictment against the national supreme administration? Not a word—not a whisper—not a shadow. Before the present administration was inaugurated the plot of treason was perfected and consummated. To-day each State is absolutely supreme in the matter of its own institutions and laws, and not one statute of the Federal Government has crossed the lines of State sovereignty, certainly not at the South, to interpose another and a restrictive authority. Utterly, utterly and forever groundless is this great crime of assailing the most generous, the most liberal, the most



beneficent Government on the face of the earth—a Government on the charity of which, in many public interests, the assailants lived. Before a witnessing world—before the tribunal of impartial history—before the bar of Omniscience, the Government at our National Capital can stand up and say to the spirit of rebellion: "Wherefore I have not sinned against thee."

Will it be pretended that the Government was quick and hot to take offense; that it rushed to arms on slight provocation, eager for the fray; that it made war certain and inevitable by precipitating its occasion and fanning its fires? Nay, was there ever before in all human annals a government so forbearing, so paternal, so calmly patient, so silently enduring under manifest and manifold wrongs, hoping against hope that right reason would reassert its sway and the hour of madness pass, pushing forbearance even to the verge of pusillanimity, straining the confidence of its friends, and stifling all the enthusiasm of its supporters, and only at last, in self-defense, by the final wrong and deadly and unprovoked assault, putting forth its power and saying to rebellion: "Thus far, but no farther!"—was there ever such a spectacle before? Kings and cabinets might well look on amazed. The muse of history will write it with unmingled admiration. Surely this Government may say it with emphasis clear and loud: "I have not sinned against thee."

And then follows the next line of the ancient vindication: "But thou doest me wrong to war against me." How palpable for the modern vindication that wrong! The wrong of a long and silently-prepared conspiracy; of munitions of war traitorously appropriated; of public treasures plundered; of the forces and armaments of public defense scattered far and wide; of the loyalty of citizens and soldiery assiduously corrupted; of forts, and arsenals, and mints, and national vessels seized; of systematic attempts to seduce State after State from the Confederacy; of insult and injury to the national functionaries; of the allegiance of more than two millions of free white citizens to the General Government formally dissolved; of armed occupancy of the national property, and finally, of battle opened with cannon and mortar against a national fortress and its commissioned defenders under the flag of their country. It may look feeble and childish; there may seem to be little of dignity and authority, when the Government waits and rises up to say, "Thou doest wrong to war against me;" but it is not undignified in God's sight; it is the grandeur of receiving wrong patiently; it is the invincible strength of right. When that protest can be truly offered, then God the righteous Judge is on our side, and with arms in our hands we may appeal to the God of battles.

And now what have we to do? We have, first of all, to let it be known where we stand; to come out every man from his si-

lence and his seclusion, and express his sympathy for the Government, and take sides, if he is a patriot, with the Union and the laws of the land. And here, thank God, the response of twenty millions of hearts outruns all exhortation. Least of all is it needed in these streets and homes that any prophet urge his fellow-men to show which cause they espouse. There was with the patriotic majorities of our Northern cities and States a long and ominous silence between the incoming of the present administration and this hour of awaking. It seemed a dull and strange apathy. It was mysterious and unintelligible. No man could fathom it. What lay beneath this calm? What did this utter blank of expression portend? Some thought it meant distrust of the Government and its policy. Some supposed it to be a wide popular reaction from the views that had won a popular victory. Some saw in it disappointment, chagrin, and discontent. Some, and they were not a few, interpreted it as a sympathy with the Southern uprising, that would in due time take on bolder forms, and inaugurate positive measures. It was as the silence of nature in the torpid winter; it was as the hush of life in the darkness of night; it was as the stillness in earth and sky that precedes the breaking of the tempest. But no seer could say what the awakening would be. The silence was yet deep and impenetrable.

And men began to feel that the sentiment of loyalty was wanting to American hearts; that ours was a style of government that could not inspire that sentiment; that we were sensitive for State rights; that we were proud of our power and prosperity; that we loved and worshiped our golden idol; but that the spirit of chivalrous and loyal devotion to our unromantic, remote, almost impersonal Government had no home in republican breasts. We know better to-day. The silence is broken and interpreted. The suppressed fire flames out. The shadowy secret is voiced forth. In that silence the fervors of patriotism were nursing themselves; the glow was becoming hotter and whiter; the pent forces were moving and accumulating, like the meeting and commingling elements of subterranean fires, before the mountain-summit opens, or the earthquake rocks a continent. And there is no symbol in nature that is this hour a fit type of the burning and enthusiastic loyalty of the whole American people. It is deeper and broader than the Father of Waters; it is more forceful and impetuous than the gushing life of spring; it is more annihilating and fatal to opposition than the lava-stream of the live volcano; it is likeliest to that unearthly tempest, that rushing, mighty wind, in which was the sounding beat of celestial pinions, and which filled Jerusalem on Pentecost, crowning each mute disciple with cloven tongues of fire.

The signal was the pulse that woke at Charleston harbor. The fire-tipped rod that discharged the first cannon on the walls of

Moultrie, was as the rod of Moses to the rock-like calm of the Northern heart. The crimsoned and starry flag came down at Sumter, tattered and stained by the smoke of battle, but not dishonored. And as though that signal had been waited for, it has gone up on every hill-top and tower, on every staff, and well-nigh every home of the North, and East, and West, and every breeze of heaven lifts it, and nightly dews baptize it, and the first sunbeam of morning and the last of evening kiss it; and tearful but resolute eyes look up to it, and firm-knit hearts and planted feet are underneath; and dearer than home and life, and sacred next to our faith and our God, is the old flag yet. Here's the sentiment of loyalty. It was not "dead but sleeping." It has awoke. Never did king, or queen, or conqueror, or any style of imperial power, draw after it a love so deep, and pure, and strong, as does that mute symbol to-day, under which our fathers fought and triumphed, under which the marches of our nation's greatness have gone onward. And now it is known at Washington, and begins to be known at that other center of usurped sovereignty, how the Northern heart beats; and the first step, that which asserted our position and sympathy, is taken.

And the next is, that we respond to the call for men and means. War, when it must be, is a dreadful necessity. It comes not like the breath of May, moist with showers and fragrant with violets. It comes like a destroying tempest, and pours abroad its arrowy sleet and iron hail, and dashes down its chained thunderbolts of doom, making wreck and havoc in all the happy fields. Paint it as you will, in colors of flaming fury and wrath, with awful death shades, you can not go beyond the fierce and grim original. There is a symbol of prophecy which to me it always recalls as its most fitting exponent, that "fourth beast," which Daniel in his vision saw rising out of the Great Sea, "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it." Woe to those that invoke it out of the tossing sea of human dissensions, and send it forth on its wasting errand; woe to the land over which passes the tread of its terrible hoofs. Beneath the all-seeing heaven to-day we can say it is not of our invoking. But must it be? Can any human interest imperiled here be worth this dreadful cost? Is there no way to hold ourselves back from this gulf?

There is a way. Yield all which rebellion asks; upon which rebellion, with arms in its hands, insists. Yield the national fortresses on Southern soil; yield the national Territories below the line; yield the national Capital; yield these cities and villages of ours to the transition marches of Southern masters, with their retinue of slaves, lingering as they will on the way; yield the right to elect to the chief magistracy by popular suffrage the man of the popular choice; yield the righteousness of that insurrection

that assumes the dignity of revolution ; yield the principle that government is no government, when any portion of its subjects disallow its supremacy ; and that an empire, or a kingdom, or a republic, may go to pieces and blot itself out from existence when men here and there shake off its authority and forswear allegiance ; burn the old constitution, and vow fealty to the new ; tear down the ten thousand banners that float to-day on the Sabbath-air, the venerated stars and stripes, and run up that traitorous rag that dishonors Sumter's battered and blackened walls. Do this, and we may avert war—for a time. Do you doubt whether we must bid so high for peace ? These have been and are the unfaltering demands. Will armed rebellion—victorious in battle—to our timid supplication reduce its demand ? But can we not pause, and treat, and settle it by negotiation and diplomacy ? We can if we will acknowledge a principle that forever disintegrates our Union, makes the permanent existence of government impossible, and formally inaugurates an element of anarchy and disruption as the law of our national life—and on no cheaper terms. Now, this being the issue, dreadful as is the necessity, it must come. Look distinctly at this issue. -It is not an anti-slavery war we wage ; not a sectional war ; not a war of conquest and subjugation ; it is simply and solely a war for the maintenance of the Government and the Constitution. Other matters and interests may have their settlement in the progress of the strife. God's providence will order concerning that ; but the question of to-day is, shall there be a government in this land, according to the organic law of the land, and the oaths of fealty to that law ? Or shall rebellion, when it will and where it will, pull and tear down, and trample and destroy, at its own lawless bidding ?

And on this issue the Government calls : Who is on our side ? Who will rally to the national flag ? Thank God again, there is no need of urgency on this point. I hear the tread of gathering thousands—I see the deep enthusiasm of souls on fire with love and duty toward the common country. I see mothers dismissing their sons with tender benedictions, and young wives buckling the sword-belt around the forms they leaned upon ; and sisters and (simple and homely, but honest and touching word) sweethearts bidding adieux to the young and brave who may return no more. The streets echo to the soldier's tread, and the strains of martial music, and with "God bless you !" streaming over them like bannered inscriptions, our brothers and our boys go forth to the war. Not here only is this response. The uprising is universal. Among the hills of New-England ; through quiet old towns and peaceful villages ; along the watercourses and the sea-shore ; in every little hamlet, where the fisherman tended his net, and the staunch yeoman followed the early plow—comes the mustering cry ; and every heart answers : "Here am I, send me." Dainty

youth, with soft hands and fair cheeks, turn from silks and laces to grasp the gleaming steel. Students leave their cloistered halls and the evening lamp for the camp and the bivouac. Gray-haired ministers of the Gospel offer their hands to fight, their lips to pray. Young lovers walk to the altar with pale brides, then join the march. From border to border within each loyal State, these scenes are repeated ten thousand times. Our foreign-born citizens show the hearts of sons for the mother that has adopted them. And those summoned first to the conflict, go forward with proud joy. It is of God. Men are inspired. His spirit has breathed upon them. A holy baptism of love and truth for native land is let down upon them. And still the current deepens and widens. It is no French conscription, it is no forced levy, it is no stealthy press-gang filling the ranks. It is the true, loyal heart of the country offering service—its young men, its heroic blood, its young ardor, its life knit to other and kindred life. Yes, go, young patriots! lay down the implements of peace; take up the weapons of war. Look not behind you—look forward—your country calls. She is our mother in this her hour of danger. She has a right to the help of her sons. Go and be valiant and faithful. You can not be otherwise. You bear names that can not be dishonored. You are followed by watchwords out of the past of New-England's story that will stir your hearts to noblest deeds when the combat deepens.

Go; if you fall at the threshold, if dastardly treason strike before the battle be manfully joined, we shall garner up your dust, and learn your names, and frame them into tender and immortal verse, and write them on our hearts. And those of kindred blood that mourn you, will stand by your graves with badges such as mourners in the time of peace never wear, and have their home henceforth in our love and reverence, and almost in our envy. And we that remain? Well, we must stand ready to go too, if we are wanted. Who is he that will shrink, if the call come? We have one life to live, and death will find us all. We can not live that life to better purpose than to serve God in serving our country. Death can not come to us at a higher post of duty than when we strike for this blood-hallowed, prayer-hallowed Union.

If we go not, the comfort of those that go in our name is our care—the comfort of deserted home-circles—of young families—of widowed mothers poor and old—of aged parents, whose time and strength for gainful toil is past—is in our heart and in our charge. We can be faithful to this most sacred trust.

If we go not, we can see that the Government shall not lack the sinews of war. Every offer of gold out of our treasures is worth more than the yellow metal; it is aid and comfort to those at the nation's head; it strikes dismay to traitorous hearts. We must have, we ought to have, but one style of utterance among us.



Let the tongues and pens whose words have helped to demoralize the North, to discourage, dishearten, and perplex the Government, and to delude the South into the belief that multitudes of our population would stand by them in any mad scheme against the Union and the nationality—tongues and pens upon which rests to-day a responsibility of crimson dye—cease their false testimony, and if they can not speak for freedom and patriotism, at least learn the safety and wisdom of silence; and if they have no loyalty in their hearts, either put on its colors openly, or openly join the league of parricides. Such men are but few to-day, any where in all the united North—very few within this old staunch Commonwealth. Would to God there were none!

We have, let us not forget, our own hearts to guard. If war is a duty, it is a Christian duty, as sacred as prayer—as solemn as sacraments. That which is sometimes called the war spirit must have no home in our breast. We must watch against its savageness—its hate—its revengefulness—its murderous rancor. When public justice smites with her sword on the neck of crime, there is no passion in her stroke, only a stern and awful sorrow. I have read of a minister of the Gospel who went into battle and dispatched one after another a score of unerring bullets; and as each took effect, he apostrophized from afar the victim: "My poor fellow, God have mercy on your soul." That is the spirit in which to fight and in which to wait.

But in this spirit we ought to make the war overwhelming. Not a hundred thousand, but a half a million of men ought to be in motion. We ought to pour our legions forward. It is mercy now to go strong and strike hard. The grapple has come—finish it quick and finish it forever. Let this contest never need to be renewed. Let it be settled from henceforth in this land that a government has a right to be a government. Let discontent and treason learn that when they stretch out sacrilegious hands to tug at the pillars of the Union, and of all constitutional law, that hand shall be stricken down, and forever palsied. Let us meet and settle this issue now, and bury it so deep, in a grave so blood-cemented, that it shall have to the end of time no resurrection. Let us not be so eager for peace as to heal this hurt slightly. Let the laws go with the armies. **HANG TRAITORS.** Above the terror of sword and bayonet, let there be the terror of the gibbet and the rope. Give not to treason, when it can be helped, the honor of a soldier's death. Widen the streets through riotous cities. Make a broad passage for the country's defenders. Raze the nests of conspirators with axe and fire. This is shortest and surest, time-saving and life-saving. Let the cautery burn this ulcer out. That is the message to-day of the law of love.

And we have finally on our hearts a solemn charge of intercession. We must let no excitement separate between our souls and



God. We have to bear up before him our friends and neighbors who have put on the soldier's uniform, that they may be Christ's soldiers as well as the country's, and be at peace with God. We have to entreat his great mercy for bleeding hearts in lonely homes—hearts whose thoughts will be straying with an irresistible fascination to the field of strife, and searching in the onset and amid the iron storm, and after sunset on the trodden ground, for well-remembered and familiar forms. We have to pray as did the royal singer and captain of Israel: "Wilt not thou, O God! go forth with our hosts?" We have to remember our enemies, and remember that they are brothers, and that their sufferings will be equal to ours, and greater—and beseech God to quell the madness of their hearts, and to be gracious to their distress. We have to entreat the Lord especially that the tempest of war may speedily pass, that the bow of peace, righteous and abiding peace, may span the dark retiring cloud, and that no such frenzy may break in again upon that great mission which he appointed us as a nation to fulfill. We have to remember, too, all the sweet charities, and kind and tender offices, and great and good endeavors, that belong to us as men and citizens and disciples, and make our almsgiving abound, and roll forward with helping hand every scheme of human amelioration and Christian zeal on which the progress of civilization and the triumph of the Gospel depend—causes and endeavors which droop in time of war—and earnestly and continually to commend these great and good enterprises to God's favor.

Waiting thus upon God, we shall best steady ourselves in the midst of whatever fluctuations. One day shall give us tidings of victory, the next perhaps of defeat. One day the flag shall rise amid the huzzahs of triumph, the next it shall sink beneath the trampling of hostile feet. If we go by the sight of the eye and the hearing of the ear, our souls will be in perpetual commotion. If we stay ourselves upon God, and look into his calm face, and remember that the issue is with him, that "the Lord is a man-of-war," that "the Lord is his name," that he will give, if our faith and constancy fail not, the victory to the right, we, too, shall be calm and courageous and of good hope.

TO REV. A. L. STONE:

The undersigned, who had the pleasure of listening to your able, eloquent, and patriotic discourse, preached before the Park-Street Church and Society this morning, believing that its sentiments should be widely diffused, would most respectfully request a copy for publication.

We are very truly, your obedient servants,

A. O. BREWSTER,  
HENRY HOYT,  
JAMES A. DIX,  
C. L. BARTLETT,  
H. O. BRIGGS,  
JNO. J. NEWCOMB,

EBEN CUTLER,  
W. T. GLIDDEN,  
EZRA FARNSWORTH,  
SAMUEL NEAL,  
NATHAN CROWELL,  
EDWARD B. HALL.

BOSTON, April 21, 1861.

BOSTON, SABBATH NOON, }  
 April 21, 1861. }

GENTLEMEN: If I yield to your request, it must be of course on the instant, with no opportunity of revising or reconsidering the words I have uttered. But I am willing to stand by them, and to speak them to the wisest possible auditory. I submit the MS. to your disposal.

Yours in devotion to our common country,  
 Messrs. A. O. BREWSTER, and others.

A. L. STONE.

---

## SERMON XVII.

BY REV. E. E. SEELYE, D.D.,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST REFORMED PROTESTANT DUTCH CHURCH.

---

### THE NATIONAL CRISIS.

"Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth him good."—2 SAMUEL 10: 12.

It is a sad and stern necessity which calls upon the ministers of peace to speak of war. As Christians, and as men, we feel an instinctive recoil from the dreadful subject; and were we able, we would gladly shut our eyes and turn away from the painful events which hourly startle us.

But it is utterly impossible to ignore them. It is vain to attempt to keep silence concerning them. The condition of our unhappy land awakens the anxious solicitude of every member of our communities. All day long we talk of it; it haunts our dreams through the troubled night.

At length the political conflicts which have long agitated our nation have culminated in deliberate violence and bloodshed. The angry cloud, so long hovering in the Southern sky, has burst in fury and disgorged its stormy magazines of wrath. The authority of our Federal Government has been defied; rebellion has reared its bloody standard, and treason has put on "the horrid front of war." That glorious old flag of the Union, whose Stars and Stripes have so long waved in peace—that symbol of freedom and hope, under whose folds the American citizen has rested in safety upon the farthest shores, and in the strangest lands—that flag, so glorious in peace and terrible in war, has been trampled under foot upon our own soil, by the men whom it has sheltered from their cradles, and who have solemnly sworn to defend it with their lives. For two days a handful of brave men in a beleagured fortress upheld it in the face of thousands of enemies; till wearied out under the fire of their destructive batteries, our

national standard was lowered before the flag of rebellion. The very Capitol of the nation is endangered, and hostile armies are marshaling to overthrow it.

In this emergency the proclamation of the President has gone forth, summoning the loyal people of the land to arms! And though it be a terrible thing to contemplate, yet I know of no grander, sublimer spectacle in human affairs, than the prompt, the universal response of the Northern millions to this call. Like a slumbering giant suddenly aroused, the nation has sprung to its feet and rushed to arms. Party differences and political animosities have been swept like the chaff of the threshing-floor. The plowman has left the furrow. The smith heard the tocsin, and dropped his hammer upon his anvil. Young men fly from the desk and the counter, from the office and the factory, from the shop and the fireside, and hurry to the rendezvous. Daily we hear the shrill fife and the stirring drum—daily the cry is: "To arms!" Fond mothers clasp their sons in agonizing sorrow, and with bedimmed eyes and fervent prayers to heaven, bid them go to their country's call. Fathers kiss their children, and with a hurried "Good-by," exchange their quiet homes for the soldier's ranks. All know the cause. The Chief Magistrate of the nation has proclaimed that our Federal Union was imperiled, and asked the people to rally for its defense. Twenty millions of freemen stand up to-day and answer: IT SHALL BE DONE.

It is useless for me to come here to-day, and affect to pass over in silence the events which crowd upon us. Even while the Sabbath's light smiles around us, and the hallowed walls of the sanctuary inclose us, we strive in vain to withdraw our thoughts from the thrilling scenes of the hour. We will not try to do it. As patriots and as Christians, it becomes us now, in this house of God, to ask what is our duty, and where is our hope?

We can find no more appropriate words to bring to you to-day, than the animating appeal of Joab to the armies of Israel, when they stood in array against the allied powers of Ammon and Syria, and carried the war to the gates of their foes: "Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth good in his sight."

The crisis of our country repeats to us the stirring exhortation: "Be of good courage, let us play the men."

True courage is a noble virtue, a most important element of Christian character. It is a sentiment far removed, and easily distinguished from a blind recklessness of danger—a savage, ferocious violence which is stirred into fury by the volcanic bursts of passion. It has its foundation in the convictions of duty, and can measure danger in its fearful reality, with a stern, unyielding fortitude. It looks the threatening emergency full in the face, it

surveys its dimensions with a cool and steady eye, and prepares to meet it, whatever be the consequences.

I rejoice to discover what I believe to be this genuine courage developing its power in the universal uprising of American freemen during the past week. There has been indeed a wonderful enthusiasm—a wide-spread excitement among the masses. But as I pass through the seething crowds, I find no one who rejoices in the strife. Thousands have rushed to arms, but it is not because our people, long used to the arts of peace, have been suddenly transformed into ruffians eager for the strife. No. If I have not mistaken utterly the temper of the people, there is but one universal feeling of deep sorrow—one anxious, earnest desire to avoid, if possible, the shedding of blood.

But back of this and deeper still, I read their stern and fell determination, at all hazards, to sustain this Government, and vindicate the Constitution. He who calculates that this mighty uprising of the past week is but an ephemeral burst of bravery—a sudden paroxysm of excitement, which will soon subside and vanish like the mist, will find that he has failed to interpret aright the phenomenon before him. The men who have mustered to arms and are mustering still, understand the mission they are undertaking. The people are serious, thoughtful, and in earnest—none seem disposed to trifle, none affect to laugh. Regiments march through some of our large cities in silence; no drum need beat to keep their courage up.

This true courage, founded on a sense of duty and a conviction of the right, is the sterling virtue which the times demand. Because it is cool, deliberate, forbearing, not a few Southern Hotspurs have been taught to speak of us as a race of cowards. But woe betide the day when they try the real temper of our people on the battle-field. It is this rational courage which reluctant to strike, and will not strike without a cause to strike for, which we need to cherish now, that we may "play the men for our people and the cities of our God."

I remark also, that such courage well becomes us now, for we are not driven to despair. I admit that our position is a trying one, but we are not lost as a nation. They who are in rebellion against the Constitution are by far inferior in numbers and resources to ourselves. That divided North—of which Secessionists have dreamed so long and hoped so much—is gone! The people of the free States to-day are a unit, more by far than were the people of the Colonies in seventeen hundred and seventy-six. Thank God! we are a nation still. We have a Government to-day! The old flag of the Union and the Constitution is the flag the people have determined shall wave aloft over this land. I am not indifferent to the seriousness of the crisis. I know that the path immediately before us looks dim and gloomy. I fear

that the shock of battle, the thunder of artillery, and the blood-stained ground, may signal the pathway over which those Stars and Stripes shall move; but they shall move from the Potomac to the Gulf. I do not despair of the Republic! In the darkest days of ancient Rome, when Hannibal, with his Carthaginian legions, had slain her Consuls and routed her last army on the bloody field of Cannæ, and was thundering at her gates—at that time the Roman Questor sold in the Forum, at public auction, and at high price, the very spot of ground outside the walls on which the conqueror was encamped. So, my countrymen, let us look with hope beyond the present tumult and distress. Let us have faith in our glorious Union to stand the shocks of revolution, and let us move with firm and cheerful confidence towards the future of our history.

I have spoken of that courage which our times demands, and which will enable us to play the men for our people, as something more than a mere spirit of bravery and contempt of danger. It is a noble moral sentiment. In its highest form it is fidelity to God and humble dependence upon his arm. Would we then put on our armor in this hour of danger, with such a courage, we need most of all to behold God's uplifted hand in these dangers, to confess with penitence our sins, to entreat his pardoning mercy, and to supplicate his blessing. God, the most High, is dealing in judgment with us for our iniquities as a people. We have provoked Jehovah to jealousy, and he has turned his face away from us in anger.

I need not refer at this time to the vices and crimes practiced in all our communities—vices for which the individual is alone responsible—for it is more appropriate for me to speak of those public sins which are justly chargeable to us as a people. It is fearfully true that in our national and political life, we have persistently disregarded the Lord our God. How has corruption long grown rank in our high places! How have truth and righteousness become so far banished from the arena of politics, that the conscientious Christian man, who fears his God, and will not descend to the falsehood and artifice and low demagoguism of party; nor buy men's votes with money, as one would cattle in the market-place—such a man is well nigh ostracized from public office. Public virtue has been debauched. Who does not know that bribery, wholesale speculation, perjury and punic faith, are familiar words every day charged upon multitudes in public life? Who seeks to conceal the fact that men reeking in vice have been promoted to our halls of legislation, or have been chosen to places upon the benches of justice? Oh! does not truth compel me to declare, that drunkenness, debauchery, gambling, Sabbath-breaking, spoliation and kindred crimes, have blackened the characters of too many men who have received the suffrages of the



people? And tell me, are the people guiltless, while such things are patent and known to all? While there is a God in heaven, shall a people expect to go on thus and escape his severest judgments? "Shall not I visit for these things?" saith the Lord Almighty. While quietness and security reigned, the public conscience slumbered. But it can not slumber now, for the visitations of divine displeasure are now upon us; our long security is disturbed, the tide of national prosperity has been checked, and we are tossed to-day amidst the heavings of revolution. Oh! is not the voice of God lifted up above the tumult to-day, calling us to repentance? What duty is more imperative at this hour, than for us to come before our God with true humility, to confess our grievous sins with unfeigned contrition, and entreat him to return to us with his favor and forgiveness? Say not, that it will dampen our courage to bow before our God. It is guilt that will make cowards of us all; and that burden must be taken away, if we would play the men for our people and the cities of our God. In all the troubles of the times, I hear the voice of God calling for a reformation among us. Repent, ye people, if ye would escape his severer strokes. Ye who know how to pray should wait earnestly at the throne of grace, that Jehovah would forgive and save us. In ancient times, when the war-note rang through the tribes of Israel, the people flocked to Shiloh to ask counsel of Jehovah, before they set the battle in array against the foe.

Let us to-day imitate their example! Let us be assured that no better preparation for the present crisis can be secured than for our people to come with humble prayer before him—to confess our sins and commit our country's cause to his almighty care. This done, we can take the field against rebellion, and in the name of the Lord set up our banner.

Again. If we would be of good courage, it is of the highest importance that we clearly understand and deeply feel the righteousness of the cause for which we struggle. In this land we take up arms as freemen. We do not muster as the blind myrmidons of a despot, or as the unthinking, irresponsible machines of which armies have been so often composed.

Our people in this land see and feel the momentousness of the issue, and can appeal to the God of holiness for the justice of their cause. It is nothing less than the very existence of our nation, as a nation. It is the question whether we are or are not a mere assemblage of peoples without a national life or unity. It is the question, whether, for nearly a century, we have been playing a stupendous farce before the world, and living and acting under the miserable delusion that we were a nation, bound together by one supreme organic law, while we were merely a co-partnership of communities, each independent of the other. It comes to this according to the fatal heresy behind which treason skulks to-day.



The doctrine of Southern secession is national suicide. To admit it—to allow States to leave the Federal Union on that basis—is to proclaim the jubilee of anarchy, the millennium of barbarism. This every man sees and feels. The premises and the conclusion are near together—so near that no keen dialectics or profound investigations are needed to discover them. The masses see them; they understand them.

I do not wonder that before such a question as this, all other issues sink out of sight, like lead in the ocean's depths. I do not see how the madness and infatuation of those who have rebelled against the Government could be exhibited in a more glaring manner, than in this extreme form in which they have chosen to stake the controversy. On all the old issues they could ask us to come and reason together. On all those questions arising out of and connected with the institution of slavery—its rights under the Constitution—how and where it might seek for extension in the territories, and what should be the policy of the Federal Government towards it—on all such questions the South might claim a hearing, and rely upon friends in the North to speak for them.

But now the scene is changed. Without waiting for a single hostile act, on the part of the Government, against their rights, they have bid defiance to the Constitution. They have declared, by their acts, that we are not a nation and never have been. They have fired upon our flag. If ever war was justifiable—if ever a nation could stand uncovered before the God of battles and appeal to his almighty arm to give victory to the right, then I solemnly believe that we may, in this hour, challenge heaven upon our side. Our Revolutionary sires fought for a holy cause, but ours is holier. Had they failed in their long struggle for independence, they still might have returned to their loyalty, and as colonies of the Mother Country, advanced in wealth and power.

But if we fail in sustaining our Federal Union now, while rebels are in arms to overthrow it, where can we go? What will be these States, but lost Pleiades—plunging into chaos and night? For us to fail in this tremendous crisis is national death and social anarchy. Never! no, never can this nation make terms with this rebellion. All see this fact. All party-lines are obliterated here, and the millions of the North stand in solid phalanx and appeal to the Almighty for the righteousness of their cause. The cause is one which every patriot can feel it worth while to die for. It is one which every Christian can plead for, before his Redeemer and his God. It is one which every minister of Jesus Christ can carry with him to the pulpit, and advocate it with the same voice with which he proclaims the wonders of redemption. Viewing this to be the position of our people in this crisis, may we not say with a noble enthusiasm: "Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people and for the cities of our God?"

Again. To the deep conviction of the equity of our cause, I may add that the duty of our people in unsheathing the sword, is strengthened by the kind forbearance of the Federal Government, under the most persistent provocations. For months the note of rebellion has rung through the South. Federal forts, arsenals, custom-houses, and treasures, have been seized by violence. Government officials have been driven from their posts. The supreme law of the land has been defied, and a rival Confederacy has arrogated its legitimate authority.

But during all these events, the Federal Government refrained from striking a blow. The nation watched with patience the progress of events, and hoped for a peaceful settlement of the controversy; but the only effect of this peaceful policy has been to embolden our adversaries and to provoke assault. Our inaction was called weakness; our deep reluctance to war was construed into cowardice—our forbearance into fear. At length all disguise was thrown off, and the work of civil war inaugurated at Charleston, where thousands of chivalrous foes opened their rebel batteries upon the walls of Sumter, defended by seventy brave men; till after two days incessant fire, the flag of our Union was lowered before its enemies.

Until that time the mighty North refused to move. Not a spear or shield was seen among her tribes; but the tidings of that assault dissipated all hopes of peace. The deep bomb of those guns in Charleston harbor has reverberated among the granite hills of New-Hampshire, along the shores of the great Lakes, beyond the Mississippi, across the broad prairies of the West, and their echoes linger still among our Northern mountains, calling freemen to the field. Henceforth forbearance became impossible. The Chief Magistrate of the Nation issued his proclamation for men, and the people are now in arms.

No calm observer of the progress of events can say that we have been hasty and eager for the fray. The freemen of the North are not thirsting for blood. I know of no one who prefers war to peace. All would have rejoiced to have escaped the conflict, but it has come; and with stern, inexorable purpose, the people have risen in their might, and have sworn to defend this Government with their treasures and their lives! Our armies are mustering to the field. We stand to-day face to face with the grim and solemn reality—WAR!

What are the particular duties which this crisis urges upon us?

First, The people are bound to answer promptly to the call for men. Mere loquacious patriotism is not what is wanted in this hour. Let those who are of suitable age and able to bear arms, enter their names upon the muster-roll. Let none refuse, without a reason which they will not be ashamed to give. Let the response be so universal that the question to be settled will be not

who shall go, but who will stay at home? I believe it will be so throughout our States. Let not our city be behind others in furnishing her quota of true men.

Secondly, We must be prepared to sustain the most vigorous policy of the Government, and second the most thorough and extended plans of operation. If we would save the effusion of blood, if we would shorten the fearful struggle, if we would conquer an enduring peace, we must smite this rebellion with a giant arm! No half-way measures will suffice. No feeble treatment will cure the malignant cancer. Surgery! terrible surgery is demanded to cut deep around its roots, and probe it to the bottom. This is not cruelty but kindness. Philanthropy demands it—patriotism and liberty demand it. Now is the time to settle the great questions of national rights and constitutional freedom, within this Union, in such a way that the grim specters of Secession and Treason shall not rise upon our graves, and shake their marrowless bones and gory locks in the faces of our posterity.

Thirdly, It is our immediate duty to provide liberally for the wants of the families of those who have gone to fight our battles. Such families have a noble claim upon us which we must cheerfully acknowledge. The soldier in his distant encampment, when he thinks of home, must be told to feel, that while he is bivouacking around his camp-fires, his wife and little ones far away, are not forgotten, but kind eyes and friendly hands are watching over them. Our contributions should be free and liberal for this purpose. Our Volunteer Relief Committees should be furnished with the means to supply the wants of every soldier's household. No Peter's pence collection should be the measure of our patriotism; but according to our individual means, let us be ready for every appeal for help.

Fourthly, As Christian men, having done all to stand and play the men for our people, let us be constant and earnest in our supplications, that the God of justice and of might will give victory to our cause. While we send forth our sons and brethren to the field, let our prayers and benedictions daily follow them. Let us not boast too much of our physical prowess, or our material resources; for the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. In God alone is our help, in this hour of trial; and while we salute our flag and cheer on our noble volunteers, let us, after all, turn to the Lord our God, who is our Sun and our Shield. The deeper our convictions are, of the righteousness of our cause, the more earnestly and boldly should we carry it in our hearts to God.

Pray then for our brethren already in arms. They have gone from our cities, towns, and villages. Some from our own community, some from this very sanctuary, at the first call of duty and of danger. They have gone to defend the Union and the

Constitution, to preserve our dearest rights, our most sacred liberties. They have gone to breast the shock of battle where the Stars and Stripes must go, to shed their blood, if needs be, and to offer up their lives upon the altar of their country. Pray for them. May the God of battles spare them from the ravages of disease, and be a shield to them in the field of combat. May his banner be over them and inspire them with a noble courage, which disdains to fly before the foe. May his divine Spirit lead them to a true and humble confidence in him, and faith in the merits of Jesus Christ his Son, that should they fall, they may die at the post of duty and be meet for heaven. Let us pray for those who are at the head of this Government, and to whom are now committed the weightiest responsibilities. Our Chief Magistrate and his associates should be remembered by our people in their prayers, that God would endue them with all that wisdom, prudence, energy, and decision which will fit them to play the men in this hour of danger. They need to-day the hearty and unwavering support of every loyal citizen. Let us then rebuke every sinister attempt to spread abroad distrust and doubt among the people. Let us feel a confidence in the Government, and pray that God would bless our rulers; and especially let us thank him that he has spared to our country that veteran chieftain whose experienced counsels now direct our military movements—that old hero who has so long led our armies on from victory to victory, and who, by his deep-laid strategy and unerring forecast, his cool, unshaken courage and accurate execution, has proved himself the greatest General\* of the age. God bless and strengthen him! May he live to see the day when the old flag shall wave again in glorious peace over this whole nation!

It is our duty also, as a Christian people, to pray for those who are in arms against us; not that God would favor their nefarious schemes or prosper their traitorous enterprises; but we can and should beseech him that he would dispel the delusion which is upon them, and reveal to them their fatal error—that he, who hath in his hands the hearts of all men, would turn their hearts from their evil purposes, that he would calm the stormy sea of passion, awaken their relents, and lead them back to loyalty and obedience.

Oh! let us guard our feelings with a double diligence in a time like the present. Let not the high-souled emotions of patriotism be mingled with the bitterness of private revenge. Let us beware lest the blade which we unsheath as the sword of justice become forged into the dagger of malice and fiendish hate. Let us pray for our enemies, that they may be converted into friends.

And having conscientiously endeavored to know our duty, and

\* Lieutenant-General Winfield Scott, the victorious hero of many battles.

prepared to meet it at every sacrifice, let us calmly repeat the concluding words of Israel's valiant chieftain: "And the Lord do that which seemeth him good."

A devout recognition of God's overruling Providence, in continually disposing of human events and determining their results, is peculiarly befitting to us in our present circumstances. The Most High ruleth in heaven and on earth; "He changeth the times and the seasons; he removeth kings and setteth up kings;" "He increaseth the nations and destroyeth them." Do all we can in marshaling the mighty men and multiplying our resources, our destinies are in his hands. Christian patriotism and courage fall back and rest on his Almighty arm, saying, when duty is done: "And the Lord do that which seemeth him good." Such a sentiment should inspire the hearts of our people in this crisis. That swaggering bravery, which cowards glory in, which vents its fiery valor in huge curses and terrific oaths and boasts when it puts on its armor more than when it puts it off, may disdain such language, and sneer at it as cant; but Christian heroes use it, and with Joab, the old scarred veteran of Israel's hosts, say: "The Lord do that which seemeth him good."

This language is creature-like and becoming, for it is the language of felt dependence, of trust and humble confidence in the Almighty. It is the language of acquiescence in his will. It is the language of conscious satisfaction that we have sought to know our duty, and have done all we could, whatever may betide us. It is the language of submissive hope, gazing with a steady eye through the thickening gloom, and catching rays of brightness in the horoscope of futurity. With this sentiment filling our hearts, we rally around the Stars and Stripes for duty, and commit our country and our liberties, our children's heritage and our national destiny, to God! "And the Lord do that which seemeth him good."

I can not close without directing your thoughts to the last peaceful refuge of the pious from all the dark and tumultuous agitations of this life. Amidst all the revolutions of State, the overturnings of empires, and the decay of human governments, there is one Kingdom which can not be moved—it is the Kingdom of God! Its throne is in the heavens. Its reign is in the hearts of all of God's redeemed people. Treason can not endanger it. Fleets and armies can not destroy it. Here is our last asylum from a troubled world. "Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." Whatever be the fate of our country and her proud institutions, we are invited to take refuge in this kingdom, and secure a citizenship in heaven. Let us listen, then, to the embassy of grace which comes to us in the Gospel, and, by true repentance and faith in Jesus Christ the

Saviour, return to our allegiance to our Father God. Then, when all that we hold dear on earth is lost, our souls may rest in heaven. Then, when we die, whether on the battle-field, amidst the charge of squadrons and the thunders of artillery, or in the tranquil hour of summer twilight, surrounded by all the gentle offices of long affection and loved associations of home, wherever our spirits take their flight from earth, we gain the victory, and win a crown of glory which fadeth not away.

---

TO THE REV. EDWARD E. SEELYE, D.D., Pastor of the First Ret. Dutch Church, Schenectady:

REV. DEAR SIR: The undersigned members of your church and parish having listened with deep interest to your views on the present condition of our national affairs, as embodied in your sermon on Sunday, the 28th inst., respectfully solicit a copy of the same for publication.

SIMON C. GROOT,  
OTIS SMITH,  
W. VAN VRANKEN,  
ERNESTUS PUTNAM,  
J. B. GRAHAM,  
C. YATES,  
H. W. V. CLUTE,

DANIEL VEDDER,  
C. F. HOAG,  
ABM. VROOMAN,  
THOS. H. REEVES,  
NICHOLAS CAIN,  
N. SWITS,  
E. ROSA.

SCHENECTADY, April 29, 1861.

TO MR. S. C. GROOT AND OTHERS:

GENTLEMEN: Your polite note, requesting me to furnish for publication the sermon I preached yesterday, on the present crisis, is received.

Although written hastily, and without the remotest view to such an end, yet if, in your judgment, it can conduce in any degree to promote a noble Christian patriotism, and subserve the cause of our beloved country, I cheerfully submit it to your disposal.

Very respectfully yours,

E. E. SEELYE.



## SERMON XVIII.

BY REV. ROBERT R. BOOTH,

PASTOR OF THE MERCER-STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. PREACHED, NEW-YORK,  
MAY 12, 1861.

### THE NATION'S CRISIS AND THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY.

"FEAR not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them."—  
2 KINGS 6: 16.

THERE is no quality of character so admirable and impressive as that which is calmly confident in the midst of adverse circumstances. That is the highest courage, the proof of the most complete manhood, which can stand firm on solid principle, and meet the storm of opposition or the thrilling peril of the hour, reposing on the strength of God and the majesty of eternal truth.

A signal illustration of this trait of character, and of the basis upon which it is sustained, is presented in the text. In that far-off age of Israel's ancient history, we witness the fortitude and moral strength which flow from a calm confidence in God, in the character and conduct of Elisha, the prophet, who was exiled and hunted from city to city for his unwavering faithfulness to the God of his fathers, who sent him to be a messenger of rebuke and warning to Israel.

One of the incidents of his manifold trials is contained in the narrative of the text. The prophet had been accused to the king of Syria of communicating to his enemy, the king of Israel, the plans and movements of the Syrian armies.

Inquiry of his dwelling-place had been made, and it was found that he was in Dothan. "Thither, therefore, the king sent horses and chariots and a great host, and they came by night, and compassed the city about. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early and gone forth, behold! an host compassed the city, both with chariots and horses. And his servant said unto him, Alas! my master, how shall we do?" The prophet's answer was the text, a reply sublime in its confidence of faith, and in its firm repose on God: "Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." And then Elisha prayed, and the forces of God, sent for the prophet's protection, were revealed to the young man. On every side around him he saw the grand display: "the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." Against such allies the hosts of Syria

could not contend. By their presence and by the power of prayer the might of the enemy was broken, and a complete deliverance accomplished for the servant of God.

Now, my brethren, we may regard the situation of Elisha amid these startling perils, and his calm faith in the higher power that was engaged for his defense, as a distinct illustration of a great truth which is engraven on the history of the world. That word of cheer which Elisha spoke to his trembling companion, is a clear prophecy of that which has since been realized in the experience of God's people amid all conflicts and reverses, and which shall be true unto the issue of the last battle in the great day of God. The substance of the truth herein presented may be set forth in the proposition, that

IN ALL THE MORAL ANTAGONISMS OF THE WORLD, THE REAL STRENGTH AND THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS IS ON THE SIDE OF THOSE WHO ARE ALLIED WITH GOD.

The fundamental thought in this proposition is, that this world, and human society as existing in it, is the scene of ceaseless moral conflict. The truth of this position can not be intelligently questioned. On every side, in every age, there is clear evidence, that the agencies of good and evil are actively at work, each intent on its own end or purpose. The moral government of God is proceeding to its sublime and triumphant issues, only through protracted and desperate conflicts.

A recognition of this truth may be traced as an article of belief in the popular creed of almost all nations. The ancient Parsees, or fire-worshippers, believed in the existence of two independent deities, whom they represented by the elements of light and darkness; the former the author of good, and the latter the source of evil. These divinities were self-existent, eternal, and incessantly active. Thus they accounted for the presence of good and evil in the moral system. Most Pagan nations, it is well known, had in like manner their good and evil deities, who are always developing their opposing natures in the moral conflicts of the world.

That great truth which is thus included in the popular beliefs of mankind at large is abundantly manifested in the practical events of life. On every page of history, in the grand and solemn progress of the Church, in the long and weary struggles of Liberty with Oppression, in the revolt of men against the restraints of wholesome laws—yea, in the social life of every community, and of almost every family, there is a constant vision of this field of strife, in which battle is joined between the good and evil.

The elements of this antagonism are presented in the text by the words, "they that are with us," and "they that are with them."

The fact herein suggested is a reality for us in our generation, as much as for any that have gone before us; the responsibilities

of this great conflict, in its broad moral and religious aspects, are upon us, and thus we need, for our encouragement and consolation, to understand the nature of the antagonism, and to discern the certain prospects of the issue.

But the significance of this truth is increased immensely, in our apprehension, by the magnitude of the crisis to which this nation has been brought, by the mysterious providence of God.

One of the boldest and most striking developments of this great antagonism which the world has ever witnessed, is right upon us. By agencies and occurrences apparently beyond the control of the great mass of the people of the land, we are brought face to face with the most stern and awful aspect of moral conflict—that in which armies are gathered to the standard of the right or are arrayed against it—and WAR, with all its wild accompaniments, with all its sacrifice of treasure, tears, and blood, is the immediate result. When one considers the peculiar import of this nation's life, and the tendency of our institutions hitherto, this result seems the more mysterious, shall I not say the more appalling?

For we have dwelt so long and so securely beneath the free institutions which our fathers founded; it has been so much our custom to settle our disputes by the decision of the majority; our conflicts have been so harmoniously adjusted by the tribunal of public opinion and established law; our armor has been so wisely and benignantly composed of argument and appeal to reason, that now, when at last we are brought face to face with the appeal to arms and martial prowess—it is not strange that Christian and reflecting minds are startled by the unusual summons, and shudder even while they prepare for the stern and awful struggle. It is important, therefore, in the highest and most Christian sense, to recognize the great element of moral conflict which runs through human history and is expressed every where in the word of God, as we survey this great antagonism which now shakes our land and moves the world.

Permit me, then, to speak to you of the SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS CRISIS IN ITS OBVIOUS NATIONAL AND MORAL ASPECTS; to present the CHRISTIAN DUTY OF THE HOUR, and THE STRONG GROUNDS WHICH SUSTAIN US IN SAYING: "Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them."

I call your attention to this subject, deeming it no departure from the legitimate and Christian service of the sanctuary. For this is a reality that presses directly upon every one of us. It takes hold of our dearest ties and fairest prospects. It enters into business circles, hindering all the movements of trade and finance; into domestic life, torturing the hearts of those who have sent sons and brothers to the field of strife; into our secret thoughts, disturbing our composure and almost shaking the foundations of our religious trust. It behooves us to understand this reality, and to

have faith in God concerning it, or its present and coming terrors will either drive our minds to madness or turn our hearts to stone.

1st. We speak of the moral significance of this great conflict, and the magnitude of the crisis which is upon us. Several points will here suggest themselves.

Most obviously, in this conflict, the UNION is at stake, and its integrity depends upon the issue. A compact and solid nation was constructed, by the wisdom of our fathers, out of the various elements of civil life which combined in the war of independence no mere confederacy, no former league of diverse tribes, but a strong nation, occupying territory that must be united in political union, speaking one language, choosing one form of government, establishing an identity of interests. It was intended to be perpetual; it was accepted with that understanding; it was ratified by the most solemn oath and covenant, and thus introduced to its own place among the nations of the earth. Under this Union we have been the happiest and most favored people in the world. It has secured us peace among ourselves, and a strength which made us respected by every foreign power. It has given us prosperity without a parallel, so that the area of our territory has been extended by honest purchase and by healthful emigration, and the sails of our commerce have whitened every sea. It has given us position and prestige throughout the world; beneath our honored ensign the traveler has been as safe as when dwelling in his own habitation, the merchantman has pursued his traffic without disturbance, and our institutions have commanded respect and honor in cabinets and courts beyond the seas. It is this Union, with its dear blessings of peace, prosperity, and power, which is at stake in this tremendous crisis.

But, further, the conflict now upon us might be settled peacefully, if this were all. Were it merely a question of the nation's boundaries and the relations of its people, it might be practicable for the conflicting sections to part in peace; the great North saying to the South, as Abram said to Lot when a strife sprang up between their herdmen: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, for we are brethren."

But not only is the Union put in peril, but the very idea and fact and force of government, as a divine institution, are imperiled in this struggle. Let the principles concerning government, which have been advanced in justification of this rebellion, be generally sustained and applied, and there is no form of law existing that could survive a year. Anarchy is the immediate and dire result. And this is so upon whatever ground it is attempted to justify the assault upon the Government. If on the ground of SECESSION as a right, then clearly it is false in fact, for no such right is conferred by the letter of the Constitution; and false in philosophy or in principle, for the right to secede from one established govern-

ment at will involves the right to sunder the ties of every government, and to take refuge in individual and universal license. But if, on the other hand, this attempt be justified under the plea of the RIGHT OF REVOLUTION, the defense is just as weak; for revolution, with the woes and horrors of civil war, can righteously be the result only when all proper constitutional modes of seeking the redress of wrongs have failed. It is worthy of notice that the word of God does not recognize the right of revolution in any cause. Its principle, as expressed in the 13th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, is that of entire and hearty and perpetual loyalty to an established government; but it has generally been conceded by writers upon civil ethics that this mode of redressing grievances may be attempted when three conditions coëxist: (1.) When the people's wrong and grievance have become visibly and manifestly unbearable; (2.) When there exists a reasonable prospect of securing speedy deliverance; and (3.) When the evils connected with the abuses complained of are clearly less than those involved in desperate conflict. These three conditions must be certain to justify a revolution. They were so clear in the great struggle for constitutional liberty in England in the 17th century, and so clear in our own revolution of the 18th century, that no one could gainsay them. But it is the height of misrepresentation and folly to affirm that under our benignant Government, administered according to the Constitution, with modes of redress prescribed and open to the use of all, revolution is a righteous appeal as a refuge against anticipated evils and wrongs that, in the nature of the case, could never be inflicted. It is therefore manifest that, in meeting this appeal to violence by the force conferred by God upon the established government, by resisting it to the last expense of treasure and of men, there is only the discharge of solemn obligation, and a resolve to continue in the exercise of that right for which government is ordained of God and approved by man. In a government which recognizes the liberty of the subject under law, there is no event so dreadful as the dishonor of the law, and no tendency so perilous as the tendency towards anarchy and license. Next to the authority of God over the heart and conscience, the majesty of constitutional law is the most sovereign, the most glorious thing upon the earth. The men who struggle in such a cause are patriots in the highest sense—the men who die for it are martyrs, and they who contend against it make war upon the best interests of humanity and the awful decree of God.

But, further, it is to be understood that in this struggle our own peculiar mode of government is equally imperiled. The interests of free institutions are at stake at this time of conflict. This crisis has a significance in this republic such as would be involved in the destinies of no other land. It was a new event in the world's history when our system of government was first estab-



lished. Men had for ages been the tools of despots, the many had been governed in the interest of the few, the world had groaned under the tyranny of courts and kings. But our fathers found their Magna Charta in the people's heart. The government they founded was in a wonderful accordance with the pattern of civil institutions which God showed to Moses in the mount. It was the wonder of the world. Such universal liberty under the supremest law—such equity combined with power—such harmonious consent amid diverse opinions; nothing like it had been ever seen. It was not strange that the thoughts of oppressed nations turned to it with a benediction for its influence and its example. It was not strange that the great tide of emigration rolled across the broad Atlantic, and poured itself upon our shores. It was not strange that the renown of this unparalleled achievement was an impulse to all men who struggled to be free. And now, after all this, we hear the verdict of opinion from the representative of European journalism, who is seeking to portray the aspect of affairs among us: "The great Republic is gone." The glory has departed from it. Its existence has not attained the limit of one century. The dream of enthusiasts, the fair illusion of the people, is a manifest and entire failure." Not so, thank God! but it is at stake. The great Republic, with all its precious freight of history, example, influence, and aid for struggling nations, is the prize for which the might of battle is enlisted. Oh! if it is worth a struggle to sustain the rights of man—to hold open wide the doors of refuge for the weary and oppressed—to stand forth in glorious example of free government before the admiring world, then it is imperative on us to be true to the traditions of our history, and meet this conflict in the strength of truth, of justice, and eternal right.

The last position in this view of the magnitude of this crisis is reached when we consider that this is a contest for the world and for all future ages. There are races and nations whose internal conflicts, or whose destruction from the earth, would have but little relation to the great hopes of the world. In their seclusion and littleness they may rise and fall, affecting by their various fortunes only their own territorial connections. But this can never be the case with this Republic. Its origin was so peculiar, its position is so central, its political institutions are so benignant, its religious privileges are so preëminent, that its decline and fall must send a thrill and shudder through every useful human institution, and the ruins of its glory must bar the path of progress for centuries to come. Especially let it be remembered that it is as the exponents of a fresh Christian civilization that this nation has acted on the world. A leavening influence has gone from it into the darkest regions, and the Gospel of the Son of God has moved on in its glorious course under the peculiar impulse which



came from the Christian missions of this land. It is no exaggeration to affirm that, all things considered, the world's best interests and highest hopes depend more on the future of America than on any other earthly influence. These interests are being settled, in a large degree, by the results of this conflict, for our institutions and our nation's life. If Napoleon could say to his soldiers, as they fought beneath the Egyptian pyramids, "Soldiers, from those summits forty centuries look down upon you," with more emphasis and more truth can we say: "Unto this field of strife, to which the might of a continent is marshaled, all living nations and all coming ages are looking." If we fail in this struggle—if the Government is broken and crushed—if barbarism and anarchy usurp the dominion—if treason and disloyalty succeed in their dreadful designs, the shock of our fall will be to the world what the fall of the sons of the morning was to the thrones and dominions of heaven—a result to be deplored through all coming ages, a beginning of woes which no tongue can describe and no thought can fathom. Well may men sing in solemn cadence:

"We are living, we are dwelling in a grand and awful time."

We turn from this view of the crisis to consider—

2d. The Christian duty of the hour. To this point especially should the servant of God direct his speech, that all thoughts may be impelled towards it, to be aroused, not to angry passion, but to a calm and holy purpose which conscience may commend and God may visibly and gloriously bless. The inquiry, What are the duties of the hour? may be summed up in these points:

Firm loyalty to the Government is the first and most urgent obligation. No good citizen, no Christian man can be neutral in such an hour. We are to prove by our individual and united action, that this people can be as true to their constitutional rulers as other nations are to an anointed king. We are to prove that hosts of freemen, rallying at the call of government, can sustain it and defend it better than it can be defended by a standing army. We are to prove ourselves worthy of our institutions, of our lineage, of our sacred cause, by making sacrifice with cheerfulness, by rendering due reverence to those whom God has placed in stations of authority, by remaining true to the great interests which are at stake, amid all risks of life or treasure, through all disasters and opposition unto the end. Again—

Another of the duties of the hour is, that we take especial pains to purge our hearts from the spirit of bitterness and wicked wrath while engaged in this most righteous struggle. Loyalty is not revenge. True courage does not revel in excesses and wanton violence. A holy cause should be sustained in righteous resolution. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." I beseech you, brethren, frown upon and denounce every where the

utterance of those among us who would sully the honor of this cause by their malignant wrath, and would excite measures of aggression scarcely less reprehensible than the outrages which have provoked them. Let pity go hand in hand with strength in all this conflict, and the majesty of our power be only equaled by the magnanimity of our gentleness. It would be for our lasting glory, as a nation, if in this strife we might overcome our antagonists even as Christ overcomes his enemies, subduing them utterly unto himself by the might of his arm, but taking them, when once subdued and penitent, into his very heart, restoring them unto the place from which they fell, and giving them the names of sons and daughters.

This conflict should be undertaken in the strength of God, and under his constant benediction. There need be no hesitation in our minds concerning the attitude of God in this field of strife. I speak with reverence, and yet with firm conviction, when I say that every attribute of God, and every movement of his hand in human history, points clearly towards the integrity and justice of our cause. If it were "conquest" that was intended, or "military subjugation," or the withholding of any right from our mistaken countrymen, we might well have our misgivings; but in a struggle for the maintenance of established government—in an attempt to arrest the destructive tendencies of the hour, and to enthrone the majesty of law in every State and in every heart, there can be no doubt. The Lord of hosts is with us, and "if God be for us, who can be against us?" He is the great bulwark of our defense. In calm confidence in the certainty of his providence, in constant reliance on the power of prayer, and in the faithful discharge of every duty without fear of consequences, we shall be guided by the strength of God, and brought to a wise and happy deliverance from our troubles.

3d. I pass, finally, to an allusion merely to the firm grounds of confidence which stand out visibly before us. "Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." That was a noble scene in Roman history, when, by the order of the Senate, the ground on which the Carthaginian army was encamped, right before the city-gate, was sold at auction, bringing readily the price at which it had always been valued. Never to despair of the Republic was a fundamental principle in that Roman state, and that unshaken confidence was a perpetual source of triumph. Far more may this be our possession.

For in this conflict the honest conscience of mankind is with us—the profoundest judgment of the world favors the maintenance of equal law; the binding obligations of oaths of allegiance; the right of the majority to rule; the preservation of a nation's natural boundaries and essential life; and the inherent and eternal obligation of a government to defend its being against wanton

and unprovoked destruction. The honest conscience of the world is with us on these points.

The progress of the world, the spirit of the age we live in, is with us too. The tendencies of the times are not towards narrow institutions, restricted intercourse, and lofty walls of demarkation. It is the nineteenth century of the acceptable year of the Lord, which the Saviour proclaimed in far Judea, bringing liberty to the oppressed, fraternity unto the warring nations, and the establishment of all human institutions on a broad and sacred basis. The blessed consummation is yet far away, but the world is moving towards it, and its progress will not permit this nation of the vanguard to take up a retreat towards the shades of anarchy or military despotism.

The providence of God is with us also, and it is our privilege and joy to note it. Why this uprising of the wrath of man has been permitted, it is not needful to inquire. God's hand is in it, and in it for a purpose of mercy we may be sure. But that his providence is working for us mightily, the events of every day bear witness. It is his hand that has drawn the lines in this great struggle, so that the right and wrong are put in boldest conflict. It is his hand that has interposed once and again to thwart the counsels of wicked men. It is his hand that has touched the hearts of these rising millions, dissolving in a moment their former ties and thralldom to the call of parties, and drawing them around one honored standard which floats above the land the emblem of "the Union, the Constitution, and the Laws." Let us discern his providence in this. Let us "thank God and take courage," for he is the Lord of hosts. He may not grant us immediate deliverance. He may try our faith and patience by reverses, but one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day; and it is a joy to feel that his great plan advances surely, that the day is hastening when they shall not hurt nor destroy in all his holy mountain.

It may come to pass that by his adjustment of this nation's strife, by the triumph of the right, and the deliverance of the state, it may appear that he was hastening his work upon the earth, and through our toil and strife, preparing for the consummation of his earthly plan—for he shall work, and none shall hinder; his word shall shake the nations, and his truth shall be proclaimed until all hearts shall love it, and

"The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks  
Shout to each other; and the mountain-tops  
From distant mountains catch the flying joy;  
'Till nation after nation taught the strain,  
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round."

NEW-YORK, May 13, 1861.

REV. AND DEAR SIR:

We find a general and earnest desire prevailing with the members of your congregation, that the Discourse delivered by you yesterday morning should be published without delay.

Fully participating in this desire, we respectfully request that you will furnish us the manuscript, that we may have it published in pamphlet form for gratuitous distribution, believing that the dissemination of its evangelical and patriotic sentiments will be highly useful in the unhappy crisis in which our country is involved.

With affection and respect, your friends,

SAMUEL R. BETTS,  
JAS. BOORMAN,  
DAVID CODWISE,  
MARSHALL S. BIDWELL,  
THOMAS BOND,  
M. M. VAIL,

JOHN W. QUINCY,  
THOMAS DENNY,  
CHARLES A. DAVISON,  
WM. M. BLISS,  
JOHN P. CROSEY,  
GEO. W. CLARKE.

To the Rev. R. R. BOOTH,  
Pastor of the Mercer-Street Presbyterian Church.

NEW-YORK, May 14, 1861.

HON. SAMUEL R. BETTS, JAMES BOORMAN, and others:

GENTLEMEN: In accordance with your request, a copy of the Sermon is herewith placed at your disposal. It was not prepared for publication, and, I fear, may not be altogether adapted to be put into print. I am glad, however, to be able to contribute, in any manner, to the support of patriotic and loyal feeling in this great crisis.

Very respectfully yours,

ROBERT R. BOOTH.